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Evaluating Tertiary Education Trust Fund's Role in Financing Colleges of Education in Nigeria: Evidence from College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State

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Abstract
This study evaluates the interventionist role of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in financing Colleges of Education in Nigeria, focusing on the College of Education (COE), Akwanga, Nasarawa State. Grounded in Human Capital Theory and Public Goods Theory, the study examines both physical infrastructure investments and academic staff development programs funded by TETFund and their overall impact on institutional productivity. A mixed-method descriptive survey design was employed, sampling academic staff across departments. Secondary data reveals a cumulative allocation exceeding ₦7.8 billion to COE Akwanga, encompassing over ₦954 million in major capital projects (such as the Home Economics, Undergraduate Programmes, School of Education complexes, etc.) and approximately ₦950 million in academic staff training and conference sponsorships (comprising 108 Ph.D. candidates, 179 Master's degree candidates, and 119 conference attendees). Primary data gathered via a validated 5-point Likert scale instrument ($\alpha = 0.84$) demonstrated statistically significant improvements in pedagogical effectiveness ($t(180) = 4.12, p < 0.001$), research publication output ($r = 0.618, p < 0.001$), and overall job satisfaction ($r = 0.542, p < 0.001$). However, critical gaps persist—most notably the absence of a modern central library facility and maintenance bottlenecks. The study recommends aligning future funding with un-earmarked institutional priorities and establishing dedicated post-intervention maintenance frameworks.

Keywords: TETFund, Higher Education Financing, Colleges of Education, Human Capital Development, COE Akwanga.

1. Introduction

Teacher education is the cornerstone of national development, as the quality of basic education relies heavily on the competence and preparation of its teaching workforce. In Nigeria, Colleges of Education serve as the primary institutions tasked with producing qualified holders of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). However, public tertiary institutions in Nigeria have historically faced severe fiscal constraints resulting from macroeconomic volatility, shifting budgetary allocations, and expanding student populations.

To cushion these financial shortfalls, the Federal Government established the Education Tax Fund under Act No. 7 of 1993, which was later repealed and replaced by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Act of 2011. TETFund is mandated to manage and disburse two percent (subsequently revised upward) of the assessable profit of registered companies operating in Nigeria to public tertiary institutions. While the fund interventions span Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education, empirical scrutiny regarding the allocation efficacy and tangible outcomes within Colleges of Education remains disproportionately sparse compared to the university sector.

Despite substantial disbursements by TETFund over the past decade, debate persists regarding the operational efficiency and localized impact of these interventions. In many Colleges of Education, structural deficits remain visible. At the College of Education, Akwanga, Nasarawa State, while TETFund has disbursed billions of Naira toward physical buildings and human capital, critical infrastructure gaps—such as the absence of a state-of-the-art central library and modern digital laboratory equipment—continue to impede academic excellence. Furthermore, administrative bottlenecks in accessing funds and inadequate maintenance plans raise questions regarding the long-term sustainability of TETFund-funded facilities.

The deterioration of educational infrastructure in Nigeria due to prolonged neglect and poor resource allocation led to the establishment of the Education Trust Fund (ETF) in 1993. In 2011, the agency was rebranded as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to focus exclusively on public tertiary institutions, including Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education. Funded by an Education Tax on the assessable profit of registered companies operating in Nigeria, TETFund is mandated to manage, disburse, and monitor these funds to arrest the rot in the higher education sector.

Colleges of Education are critical to Nigeria's educational ecosystem, tasked with producing competent teachers for primary and junior secondary schools. The College of Education, Akwanga (COEA), established in 1976 in Nasarawa State, relies heavily on both state allocations and federal interventions. This research evaluates the specific impact of TETFund's financing on physical infrastructure, academic staff capacity, and research output at COEA.

The mandate of TETFund covers several core intervention lines: Normal Intervention, Library Intervention, Research Grants, Academic Staff Training & Development (AST&D), Publication of Journals, Manuscript Development, and Conference Attendance.

Historically, state-owned institutions like COEA face severe budgetary constraints from their proprietary state governments, making TETFund an indispensable financier. Recent data from TETFund's 2026 strategic planning indicates that an allocation of ₦2,056,527,973.04 is designated for each public College of Education in the direct intervention cycle. Despite these massive financial injections, policy reviews often point to systemic challenges, such as the inability of beneficiary institutions to access funds promptly due to stringent retirement guidelines, procurement laws, and internal administrative hurdles.

This study evaluates the true extent of TETFund's financial interventions at COE Akwanga and assesses its empirical impact on academic staff productivity and institutional growth. The specific objectives are;

1. To evaluate the scale and distribution of TETFund financial allocations for physical infrastructure at COE Akwanga.
2. To examine the impact of TETFund academic staff development grants on teaching quality, research output, and lecturer productivity at COE Akwanga.
3. To identify operational challenges impeding the optimal utilization of TETFund resources in the institution.

The study hypothesized that;

- H_{01}**:** TETFund-sponsored academic staff training has no significant impact on the pedagogical effectiveness and teaching quality of lecturers at COE Akwanga.
- H_{02}**:** There is no significant relationship between TETFund training interventions and the research publication output of academic staff at COE Akwanga.
- H_{03}**:** Benefiting from TETFund staff development programs does not significantly improve overall lecturer job satisfaction and professional productivity.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary economic and educational theories:

1. **Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964):** Posits that investments in individuals through education, training, and professional development yield quantitative returns in productivity, innovation, and institutional output. Applied to this study, TETFund's sponsorships for Master's,

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Ph.D., and conference programs represent direct human capital investments designed to elevate teaching standards and research capabilities at COE Akwanga.

2.Public Goods Theory (Samuelson, 1954): Asserts that non-excludable and non-rivalrous goods (such as public tertiary education infrastructure) require state-backed intervention to prevent market failure and systemic underfunding. TETFund functions as an interventionist state mechanism supplying public educational capital that standard state budgets fail to provide fully.

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+--------------------------------------------------------------------+
|                  TETFUND ACT 2011
|          Interventionist State Allocations
+----------------------------------+----------------------------------+
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+----------------------+----------------------+
     |                               |
     v                               v
+----------------------+     +----------------------+
| PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE|     |HUMAN CAPITAL DEVT   |
| - Faculty Complexes  |     | - Local/Intl Degrees  |
| - ICT Laboratories   |     | - Academic Conferences|
  |  |  +----------------------+----------------------+
                         |
                         v
+--------------------------------------------------------------------+
|      INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY       |
|      Pedagogical Mastery | Research Output | ICT Integration     |
+--------------------------------------------------------------------+
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2.2 Empirical Review

Previous literature yields mixed conclusions regarding interventionist funding in Nigerian tertiary education. Okebukola (2018) highlighted TETFund as the single largest stabilizer of public tertiary infrastructure over two decades. Conversely, Okuwa and Campbell (2020) argued that structural underfunding persists because intervention funds are frequently utilized as substitutes for, rather than supplements to, statutory state budgetary provisions. Studies focusing on Colleges of Education (e.g., Balami et al., 2021) observe that while capital projects are highly visible, academic staff development often suffers from post-sponsorship brain drain or institutional inertia caused by inadequate facilities upon the scholars' return.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Study Area

This study utilized a descriptive survey design incorporating both quantitative primary data and secondary financial records. The study location was the College of Education, Akwanga, an institution established in 1977 in Nasarawa State, North-Central Nigeria.

3.2 Population and Sampling Technique

The target population comprised all academic staff ($N = 340$) and senior administrative officers at COE Akwanga. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to select 182 academic staff members across the institution's six schools (Education, Arts and Social Sciences, Languages, Sciences, Vocational and Technical Education, and Early Childhood/Primary Education)

The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled the *TETFund Training and Lecturer Productivity Questionnaire (TTLPQ)*. The instrument comprised two sections: Section A captured demographic metrics and training history, while Section B comprised 10 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1)

The instrument underwent face and content validation by experts in educational measurement and evaluation. Reliability was established through a pilot study involving 20 lecturers outside the primary

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sample. Cronbach's alpha test yielded an overall reliability coefficient (α) of **0.84**, confirming internal consistency above the standard 0.70 threshold.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). Secondary data on financial allocations were presented using descriptive frequencies and percentage breakdowns. Primary data items were evaluated using mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (SD), adopting a criterion mean threshold of 3.00. Hypotheses were tested at a $\alpha = 0.05$significance level using:

- **Independent Samples t-test:** To test $H_{01}$by comparing pedagogical scores of TETFund training beneficiaries against non-beneficiaries.
- **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r):** To test H_{02} and H_{03} by evaluating relationships between training exposure, research publication output, and productivity scores.

4. Results

4.1 TETFund Financial Interventions at COE Akwanga

The secondary data synthesized from institutional audit reports and official TETFund releases indicates that cumulative interventions at COE Akwanga stand at over **₦7.8 billion**.

Funding Category	Target Scope / Completed Deliverables	Total Allocation (NGN)
Physical Infrastructure	Home Economics Complex, Undergraduate Complex, School of Education Complex	~ ₦954,804,436
Academic Staff Training	108 Ph.D. scholars (Foreign/Local), 179 Master's degree scholars	~ ₦799,570,466
Conference Attendance	119 Academic and Non-Academic Conference Sponsorships	~ ₦150,925,069
Other Interventions	Library Development, ICT Support, Manuscript/Textbook Development	~ ₦5,974,132,429
Total Interventions	**Cumulative Institutional Interventions**	**~ ₦7,879,432,390**

Source: Field Study, 2026

The data confirms that physical infrastructure and staff development account for the most direct, capital-intensive investments within the institution.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Survey Responses

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Lecturer Productivity Metrics ($N = 182$).

S/N	Survey Item Metric	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
1	Subject Matter & Discipline Mastery	4.38	0.62	Agreed
2	Adoption of Modern Pedagogical Strategies	4.21	0.71	Agreed
3	Annual Peer-Reviewed Publication Increase	3.89	0.85	Agreed
4	ICT Integration in Classroom Instruction	3.76	0.92	Agreed
5	Observed Student Academic Engagement	3.94	0.78	Agreed
6	Mentorship of Junior Academic Staff	4.15	0.68	Agreed
7	Contribution to Curriculum Development	3.82	0.81	Agreed
8	Overall Motivation & Job Satisfaction	4.08	0.75	Agreed

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Source: Field Study, 2026
Criterion Mean = 3.00. All items exceeded the benchmark, demonstrating positive perceptions across all surveyed indicators.
Table 1 outlines the responses of academic staff regarding TETFund training outcomes ($N = 182$).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1 (H_{01})

Pedagogical effectiveness score comparison between Beneficiaries ($n_1 = 112$) and non-beneficiaries ($n_2 = 70$).

An Independent Samples t-test was conducted. Beneficiaries of TETFund training recorded a significantly higher mean pedagogical score ($\bar{x} = 4.28, SD = 0.54$) than non-beneficiaries ($\bar{x} = 3.81, SD = 0.72$).

- **Result:** $t(180) = 4.12, p = 0.0001$.
- **Decision:** Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is **rejected**. TETFund academic training exercises have a statistically significant positive impact on teaching quality and pedagogical effectiveness.

Hypothesis 2 (H_{02})

Correlation between TETFund sponsorship and research publication output.

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was computed.

- **Result:** $r = 0.618, p = 0.0001, N = 182$.
- **Decision:** Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is **rejected**. There exists a statistically significant, strong positive relationship between TETFund sponsorship and lecturer research output.

Hypothesis 3 (H_{03})

Correlation between training sponsorship and overall job satisfaction/productivity.

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was computed.

- **Result:** $r = 0.542, p = 0.0001, N = 182$.
- **Decision:** Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is **rejected**. TETFund staff development programs significantly enhance job satisfaction and holistic productivity.

4. Discussion

The empirical results demonstrate that TETFund has been a vital financial pillar for COE Akwanga. The injection of over ₦7.8 billion has drastically altered the campus's physical and academic infrastructure. The statistical rejection of all three null hypotheses aligns with Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961), proving that systematic funding of higher degrees (108 Ph.D.s and 179 Master's degrees) yields measurable improvements in teaching methodology, research output, and peer mentorship.

However, qualitative synthesis and survey item responses (specifically regarding implementation barriers) reveal a disconnect. This is because despite multi-billion Naira funding streams, the college management explicitly noted the persistent lack of a modern central library complex. Returning scholars, equipped with advanced foreign and local training, report frustration over under-equipped laboratory facilities and unstable digital infrastructure, which restrict their capacity to sustain peak research momentum.

This confirms the assertions of Okuwa and Campbell (2020) that infrastructure development under interventionist models often proceeds asymmetrically to immediate institutional needs due to rigid, top-down bureaucratic approval templates.

5. Conclusion

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) plays an indispensable role in maintaining the structural and operational viability of Colleges of Education in Nigeria, as evidenced by data from COE Akwanga. Financial allocations totaling over ₦7.8 billion have expanded capital facilities and upgraded the academic qualifications of hundreds of faculty members. These investments have yielded verifiable improvements in teaching quality, research publication rates, and lecturer motivation. Nevertheless, the full potential of these interventions remains constrained by structural gaps—chiefly the lack of a modern central library, administrative delays in fund release, and inadequate maintenance frameworks for existing capital assets.

6. Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. TETFund and COE Akwanga management should re-align immediate capital intervention cycles toward constructinig and equipping a state-of-the-art central library and digital resource center.
2. To prevent skill decay among the 287 newly trained Master's and Ph.D. scholars, TETFund should mandate that staff development allocations be coupled with micro-grants for specialized departmental lab equipment.
3. TETFund should review its administrative verification processes to eliminate procedural delays in releasing approved training funds and project allocations.
4. Nasarawa State Government and COE Akwanga management must allocate a fixed percentage of internal revenue specifically to maintain TETFund-constructed facilities, preventing structural deterioration.

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